

# HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD'S TEAM?

By the American Swimming Coaches Association

The first question really should be, "Why should I help the team?" The answer for many people is not clear, although it seems like it should be. The simplest reason is also the most powerful. You should help because your child benefits greatly from the program. The second reason is that most clubs cannot function without substantial volunteer help. The economics are not there for a full professional staff to do all the things that need doing.

Look at the finances of youth sports for a moment. Nobody likes to pay bills. Now count up the hours that are available for your child to participate in your program. Divide your monthly fee by those hours, and you will come out with substantially less than you pay your baby sitter. And the baby sitter doesn't provide much in the way of a learning situation, values education, physical exercise and development or role model. Now imagine if you had to pay for all you get from your team. Teams can't do it without your help. Add to that the fact that few clubs have full time coaches, and even fewer have more than one full time coach, and you can begin to recognize the need for parental involvement.

The club needs your help. Now let's get along to how you can provide that help. People have strange attitudes toward working with organizations. In most, a very few people do a tremendous amount of work that benefits everyone. There are parents who develop workaholic behavior towards teams. This is a bad deal for everyone. That person sooner or later burns out, leaving a big hole to fill. Meanwhile, that individual holds a great deal of power in the club, according to the rule that says, "he that does, decides." (That unwritten rule operates in all volunteer organizations, doesn't it?)

The club needs a little bit of time from everyone, a little more from some, and on occasion, a great deal from a few. Note that when you find your lawn uncut, the dishes three days deep in the sink, your cat starving on the porch, and you have just driven home from the team leaving forgetting half of the carpool, you are over committed. This may also result in your children thinking that your club job is more important than they are.

Lastly, remember that a parent organization is a watchdog of philosophy...that same philosophy that attracted you to the team. Stability is what builds the organization and your support for that stability is the key thing you can contribute. I like the thought of "bloom where you are planted." As your child progresses in sports, stay with your club and help it progress. Involve yourself in helping to set goals and objectives and make it great! And remember, it is all for FUN, and all for your youngster.